

**APPLICATION INFORMATION**  
**CALIFORNIA REGISTERED DENTAL HYGIENIST (RDH) LICENSURE (4/05)**

**Instructions for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Year California Dental Students ONLY**

Registered Dental Hygienists (RDH's) are licensed in California by the Committee on Dental Auxiliaries, Dental Board of California. Applicants must pass both a clinical examination, a National written examination, examinations in California law and ethics, and undergo a criminal history investigation, prior to receiving a license.

Temporary permits to practice prior to receiving a license cannot be issued. Dental or hygiene education or licensure in another country is not recognized in California. Licensure as a Registered Dental Hygienist in another State may qualify for Licensure by Credential which requires a different application and instructions.

**IT IS A CRIMINAL OFFENSE TO PRACTICE AS A REGISTERED DENTAL HYGIENIST WITHOUT FIRST RECEIVING A LICENSE.**

**APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS**

**1. Fee.** Each application must be accompanied by a fee of \$495.00. (Application fee \$20.00 -- Examination fee \$475.00). Make check payable to: **Committee on Dental Auxiliaries**

**2. Requested Information.** All information requested must be supplied by applicant by the published application final filing date. Each question must be answered fully, truthfully and accurately. A false statement is a crime, and grounds for denial of licensure.

If the space for any answer is insufficient, the answer shall be completed in space 15 or on an attachment signed by the applicant and specifying the number of the question to which it relates.

**3. Filing of Completed Application.** The COMPLETED application must be on file with the COMDA office not later than forty-five (45) days prior to the first examination date. In addition to the application and fee, you must submit ALL of the following. If all required information and documents are not received as described below, you WILL NOT be permitted to sit for the examination.

**a. Photograph.** One 1-1/2" X 1-1/2" head passport photograph of yourself taken within six (6) months of the examination must be submitted with your application in the coin envelope. Be sure to write your name on the back of the photo.

**b. Fingerprints.** All First-Time applicants within the state must have their fingerprints scanned. (See enclosure "Fingerprint Scanning Required"). If applicant is residing outside the state, two completed fingerprint cards must be submitted with your application and an **additional fee of \$56.00** for fingerprint processing.

**c. License Status in Other States.** Individuals licensed in other states must include in their application certification of license status by all states in which licensed regardless of the status of the license.

**d. Certification of Good Standing as a 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> Year California Dental Student.** Applicants must currently be in good standing as a 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> year dental students at a California dental school. The school **MUST** complete question 8 on page 2.

**e. Written Examination.** Successful completion of the National Board of Dental Examiners' examination for dental hygienists is required. Confirmation of successful completion by the Joint Commission on Dental Examinations must be received by COMDA at least 30 days prior to the deadline for the clinical examination.

**f. Verification of completion of California Board-approved expanded function courses.** In order to take the clinical examination, Applicant will only be allowed to take the clinical examination, question 9 on page 2 must be completed by the dental school. In the alternative, the applicant may provide evidence of having completed a separate board-approved course in this function.

In order for the applicant to perform the following functions once licensed, questions 10a, 10b, and 10c must be completed by the dental school. In the alternative, the applicant may provide evidence of having completed separate board-approved courses in these functions.

- soft tissue curettage
- administration of nitrous oxide/oxygen
- radiography

**4. Re-Examination Applicants.** Applicants who have taken and failed the examination within the last two years are only required to submit the application, \$475.00 examination fee, and the 1-1/2" X 1-1/2" photo.

**5. Special Accommodations.** Applicants whose religious beliefs preclude being examined on Saturday or Sunday must clip a note to the application stating the day on which they cannot take the exam and the reason why. After your application is processed, it is not possible to change examination dates.

If you have a disability and may require special accommodations, request and submit a "Request for Accommodation" with the application. If accommodation is not requested in advance, availability cannot be guaranteed.

**6. Requests for Refunds.** All requests for cancellation of examination must be received a minimum of 15 days prior to the examination.

Requests made less than 15 days prior to the exam are not eligible for refund of the exam fee. The \$20 application fee is non-refundable, and a fee will be charged for all returned checks.

#### **CLINICAL EXAMINATION**

Each applicant must pass a clinical examination that includes an examination of a patient and complete scaling and root planing of one or two quadrants.

Refer to the separate Clinical Examination Information document for detailed information about the examination.

#### **FACILITIES**

When available, the rental of equipment and radiological services is an accommodation

provided by the dental school. It is not obligatory and may be suspended at any time by the school. The schools at their discretion may charge fees for supplies or services.

COMDA derives no benefit from the rental of such equipment and services, and assumes no responsibility for any arrangement made between a school and the examination candidate.

Examinations may be conducted each year in the following dental schools: (Schedule of examinations is provided in a separate listing)

University of California, San Francisco  
School of Dentistry  
707 Parnassus Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94143  
(415) 476-1778

UOP School of Dentistry  
2155 Webster Street  
San Francisco, CA 94115  
(415) 929-6445

University of Southern California  
School of Dentistry  
925 West 34th Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90007  
(213) 740-3564

Since accommodations, facilities and equipment vary at different schools, candidates may wish to acquaint themselves with the premises and equipment available prior to the examination. Schools are not responsible for patient procurement or answering questions on patient acceptability.

#### **RESULTS OF THE EXAMINATION**

The results of the examination will be mailed to candidates approximately six (6) weeks after the last exam date in the cycle. Do not phone COMDA before this time, since staff is not permitted to give out results over the telephone.

Licenses will NOT be issued without criminal history clearance from the Department of Justice and the FBI.

California law requires all licensees to have a Social Security number. A license will not be issued without a copy of the social security card.

## CURRENT DUTIES OF THE REGISTERED DENTAL HYGIENIST

### IT IS A CRIMINAL OFFENSE TO PRACTICE AS A REGISTERED DENTAL HYGIENIST WITHOUT FIRST RECEIVING A LICENSE.

Be sure to become familiar with the duties that Registered Dental Hygienists are allowed to perform in California, as contained in the following laws and regulations.

**Section 1068. POSTING OF DENTAL AUXILIARY DUTIES.** All dentists utilizing the services of dental auxiliaries shall post a notice in a common area of the office which delineates duties and functions deemed by the board as delegable within stipulated settings and/or circumstances. Such notice shall be readily accessible to all individuals under supervision of the dentist.

**Excerpts from Section 1067. Definitions.** As used in this subchapter: ...

(d) "Registered dental hygienist" or "RDH" means a licensed person who may perform all procedures authorized by the provisions of these regulations and in addition may perform all functions which may be performed by a dental assistant and registered dental assistant, under the designated supervision of a licensed dentist.

...  
(g) "Oral prophylaxis" means the preventive dental procedures including complete removal of explorer-detectable calculus, soft deposits, plaque, stains, and the smoothing of unattached tooth surfaces. The objective of this treatment shall be creation of an environment in which hard and soft tissues can be maintained in good health by the patient.

...  
(i) "Direct supervision" means supervision of dental procedures based on instructions given by a licensed dentist who must be physically present in the treatment facility during performance of those procedures.

(j) "General supervision" means supervision of dental procedures based on instructions given by a licensed dentist, but not requiring the physical presence of the supervising dentist during the performance of those procedures.

#### **1684.5 Unprofessional Conduct**

(a) In addition to other acts constituting unprofessional conduct under this chapter, it is unprofessional conduct for any dentist to perform or allow to be performed any treatment on a patient who is not a patient of record of that dentist. A dentist may, however, after conducting a preliminary oral examination, require or permit any dental auxiliary to

perform procedures necessary for diagnostic purposes, provided that the procedures are permitted under the auxiliary's authorized scope of practice. Additionally, a dentist may require or permit a dental auxiliary to perform all of the following duties prior to any examination of the patient by the dentist, provided that the duties are authorized for the particular classification of dental auxiliary pursuant to Article 7 (commencing with Section 1740):

(1) Expose emergency radiographs upon direction of the dentist.

(2) Perform extra-oral duties or functions specified by the dentist.

(3) Perform mouth-mirror inspections of the oral cavity, to include charting of obvious lesions, malocclusions, existing restorations, and missing teeth.

(b) For purposes of this section, "patient of record" refers to a patient who has been examined, has had a medical and dental history completed and evaluated, and has had oral conditions diagnosed and a written plan developed by the licensed dentist.

(c) This section shall not apply to dentist providing examinations on a temporary basis outside of a dental office in settings including, but not limited to, health fairs and school screenings.

(d) This section shall not apply to fluoride mouth rinse or supplement programs administered in a school or preschool setting.

#### **1760. Functions of RDHs**

The following functions may be performed by a registered dental hygienist in addition to those authorized pursuant to Sections 1760.5, 1761, 1762, 1763, and 1764:

(a) All functions that may be performed by a dental assistant or a registered dental assistant.

(b) All persons holding a license as a registered dental hygienist on January 1, 2003, or issued a license on or before December 31, 2005, are authorized to perform the duties of a registered dental assistant specified in Section 1754. All persons issued a license as a registered dental hygienist on and after January 1, 2006, shall qualify for and receive a registered dental assistant license prior to performance of the duties specified in Section 1754.

#### **1760.5. Practice of dental hygiene**

(a) The practice of dental hygiene includes dental hygiene assessment, development, planning, and implementation of a dental hygiene care plan. It also includes oral health education, counseling, and health screenings.

(b) The practice of dental hygiene does not include any of the following procedures:

(1) Diagnosis and comprehensive treatment planning.

(2) Placing, condensing, carving, or removal of permanent restorations.

(3) Surgery or cutting on hard and soft tissue including, but not limited to, the removal of teeth and the cutting and suturing of soft tissue.

(4) Prescribing medication.

(5) Administering local or general anesthesia or oral or parenteral conscious sedation, except for the administration of nitrous oxide and oxygen, whether administered alone or in combination with each other, or local anesthesia pursuant to Section 1761.

#### **1761. Dental hygiene direct supervision duties**

A dental hygienist is authorized to perform the following procedures under direct supervision, after submitting to the board evidence of satisfactory completion of a board-approved course of instruction in the procedures:

(a) Soft-tissue curettage.

(b) Administration of local anesthesia.

(c) Administration of nitrous oxide and oxygen, whether administered alone or in combination with each other.

#### **1762. Dental hygiene general supervision duties**

A dental hygienist is authorized to perform the following procedures under general supervision:

(a) Preventive and therapeutic interventions, including oral prophylaxis, scaling, and root planing.

(b) Application of topical, therapeutic, and subgingival agents used for the control of caries and periodontal disease.

(c) The taking of impressions for bleaching trays and application and activation of agents with nonlaser, light-curing devices.

(d) The taking of impressions for bleaching trays and placements of in-office, tooth-whitening devices.

#### **1763. Allowable dental hygiene duties without supervision**

(a) A dental hygienist may provide, without supervision, educational services, oral health training programs, and oral health screenings.

(b) A dental hygienist shall refer any screened patients with possible oral abnormalities to a dentist for a comprehensive examination, diagnosis, and treatment plan.

(c) In any public health program created by federal, state, or local law or administered by a federal, state, county, or local governmental entity, a dental hygienist may provide, without supervision, dental hygiene preventive services in addition to oral screenings, including, but not limited to, the application of fluorides and pit and fissure sealants.

#### **1764. Dental hygiene supervision; Allowable settings; Use of materials and devices**

(a) Any procedure performed or service provided by a dental hygienist that does not specifically require direct supervision shall require general supervision, so long as it does not give rise to a situation in the

dentist's office requiring immediate services for alleviation of severe pain, or immediate diagnosis and treatment of unforeseeable dental conditions, which, if not immediately diagnosed and treated, would lead to serious disability or death.

(b) Unless otherwise specified in this chapter, a dental hygienist may perform any procedure or provide any service within the scope of his or her practice in any setting, so long as the procedure is performed or the service is provided under the appropriate level of supervision required by this article.

(c) A dental hygienist may use any material or device approved for use in the performance of a service or procedure within his or her scope of practice under the appropriate level of supervision, if the dental hygienist has the appropriate education and training required to use the material or device.

#### **1765. Persons who may practice dental hygiene**

No person other than a licensed dental hygienist or a licensed dentist may engage in the practice of dental hygiene or perform dental hygiene procedures on patients, including, but not limited to, supragingival and subgingival scaling, dental hygiene assessment, and treatment planning, except for the following persons:

(a) A student enrolled in a dental or a dental hygiene school who is performing procedures as part of the regular curriculum of that program under the supervision of the faculty of that program.

(b) A dental assistant acting in accordance with the rules of the board in performing the following procedures:

(1) Applying nonaerosol and noncaustic topical agents.

(2) Applying topical fluoride.

(3) Taking impression for bleaching trays.

(c) A registered dental assistant acting in accordance with the rules of the board in performing the following procedures:

(1) Polishing the coronal surfaces of teeth.

(2) Applying bleaching agents.

(3) Activating bleaching agents with a nonlaser light-curing device.

(d) A registered dental assistant in extended functions acting in accordance with the rules of the board in applying pit and fissure sealants.

(e) A registered dental hygienist licensed in another jurisdiction performing a clinical demonstration for educational purposes.

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